

**09-585, Ch. 25 - Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund
Strategic Plan
January, 2007**

Overview

The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund was established in July, 1995 through L.D. 717, An Act to Establish the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. As stated in Title 12, MRSA c. 903, section 10303,

"The fund is for the sole purpose of maintaining, improving and expanding state and local natural resource conservation programs and associated compatible public uses in accordance with the strategic plan provided for by section 10308, subsection 5, paragraph A."

Title 12, MRSA c. 903, section 10308 charges the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board with adopting a strategic plan for each of the funding categories listed in section 10307. As the law states, "The strategic plan must identify the priority areas for funding...using the criteria listed in section 10309." This strategic plan is intended to fulfill the requirements of Title 12, MRSA c. 903, section 10308 stated above, and to provide direction to the Board and natural resource agencies on the long-term funding priorities of the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Guiding Principles

The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board will be guided by the following principles as it considers grant requests during the period of its duration, which is expected to be the next six years – through December, 2013. It will give preference to projects that most substantially accomplish one or more of these objectives:

- conserve Maine's outdoor heritage and demonstrate outstanding natural-resource or recreational benefits;
- maximize degree and diversity of public/private partnerships or other types of matching funds; projects with a cash match of 1/3 or higher are encouraged (see grant application guidelines for further detail on what constitutes cash match);
- form alliances between natural resource agencies, interest groups and organizations based on shared visions and mutual responsibility;
- address natural resource concerns of statewide significance and/or broad geographical distribution;

Fund Distribution Categories and Grant Criteria

As specified in Title 12, MRSA c. 714, section 10307, only Natural Resource Agencies may apply for a Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant. They may do so independently or in partnership with other entities. The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board encourages non-governmental organizations interested in projects to contact the appropriate Natural Resource Agency listed in Attachment (C) to submit a grant application.

Dollar amount of grants will vary. The Board will allocate funds according to four major fund distribution categories outlined in Title 12, MRSA c. 714, section 10307 and stated below. The percentage of overall Board funding allocated to each of the four categories is also outlined in Title 12, MRSA c. 714, section 10307 and stated below.

1. Fisheries and wildlife, and habitat conservation projects (35%)

The Board shall consider whether a project involves:

- a) Protection/enhancement of a species, species group, natural community or ecosystem adversely affected due to lack of management or habitat loss;
- b) Protection/enhancement of a species, species group, natural community or ecosystem that is adversely affected due to unusual vulnerability to human or natural disturbances, or need for a special or limited habitat type;
- c) Provision of benefits vital to the future welfare of a species or species group;
- d) Education about fisheries, wildlife, natural community and habitat conservation;
- e) Equipment and training to improve efficiencies in fisheries, wildlife and habitat conservation efforts;
- f) Protection/enhancement of a species, species group, natural community or ecosystem of statewide or regional significance; or
- g) Environmental monitoring.

2. Acquisition and management of public lands, parks, wildlife conservation areas and public access and outdoor recreation sites and facilities (35%)

Land acquisition projects may involve a range of land types (eg. forestlands, agricultural lands, wetlands, grasslands) that support wildlife conservation and public recreation. The Board shall consider whether a project involves:

- a) Public outdoor recreation sites and facilities or lands of statewide or regional significance;
- b) Acquisition and public management of habitat or species, species group, natural community or ecosystem of statewide or regional significance;
- c) Acquisition and public management of habitat of a threatened or endangered species listed under state or federal law;
- d) Acquisition and public management of rare or exemplary natural communities or ecosystems as determined by the State's Natural Areas Program database;
- e) Protection/enhancement of rare or exemplary geological features;
- f) Areas with proximity to lands dedicated to conservation purposes or public recreation.

- g) Education about the management and use of public lands, parks, wildlife conservation areas, and public access and outdoor recreation sites and facilities;
- h) Equipment and training to improve efficiencies in the management of public lands, parks, wildlife conservation areas, and public access and outdoor recreation sites and facilities;
- i) Development and maintenance of outdoor recreational facilities and access sites.
- j) Environmental monitoring of public lands, parks and wildlife conservation areas.

3. Endangered and threatened species conservation projects (15%)

The Board shall consider whether a project involves:

- a) A species or species group listed as endangered or threatened under state or federal law;
- b) The habitat of one or more species listed as endangered or threatened species under state or federal law;
- c) A species or species group not listed as threatened or endangered but, based on the best available scientific information, potentially warranting listing in near future;
- d) A species, species group, natural community or ecosystem that has been documented as being in decline or recognized as being at risk of extirpation from the State;
- e) A species, species group, natural community or ecosystem thought in the best professional judgment of biologists to be in decline or in danger of extirpation from the State but whose status is undetermined;
- f) Education about conservation of rare, threatened and endangered species, species of special concern, and/or exemplary natural communities;
- g) Equipment and training to improve efficiencies in the conservation of rare, threatened and endangered species, species of special concern, and exemplary natural communities; or
- h) Environmental monitoring of rare, threatened, endangered species or habitat

4. Natural resources law enforcement and protection of public health (15%)

The Board shall consider whether a project involves:

- a) Public health or safety concerns of statewide or regional significance;
- b) Biological indicators that would signal threats to Maine's air quality, water quality, wildlife or wildlife habitat, and/or health of Maine's ecosystems;
- c) Environmental education for the public or law enforcement personnel;
- d) Cross-training between natural resources state agencies;
- e) Equipment and training to improve efficiencies in natural resources law enforcement;
- f) Education of the public about natural resource laws and enforcement

**Definitions of Terms used in Strategic Plan
(from Title 12, MRSA c. 903, section 10301)**

1. **Acquisition.** "Acquisition" means fee ownership, easement, lease, right-of-way and other less-than fee interests in land.
2. **Board.** "Board" means the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board.
3. **Coordinator of the Natural Areas Program.** "Coordinator of the Natural Areas Program" means the person appointed by the Commissioner of Conservation to be responsible for coordinating the Natural Areas Program.
4. **Fund.** "Fund" means the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.
5. **Matching funds.** "Matching funds" means any combination of public and private funds used in conjunction with the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund, including, but not limited to, private contributions of cash or securities, money from municipal or other public agencies, money from a federal matching program, in-kind contributions or any combination thereof.
6. **Natural resources agencies.** "Natural resources agencies" means state agencies, bureaus, boards, commissions or other instrumentalities having jurisdiction over the protection of the State's natural resources.
7. **Public-private partnership.** "Public-private partnership" means any partnership between federal agencies, state agencies or individuals or any combination of federal agencies, state agencies or individuals, including corporations and private persons or organizations, where at least 1/3 of the funding is contributed by a nongovernmental organization or individual.
8. **Wildlife.** "Wildlife" means wild organisms, including vertebrate, invertebrate and plant species.

B. Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application Guidelines

Only Natural Resource Agencies may apply for a Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund grant. They may do so independently or in partnership with other entities. For a current list of the known State's Natural Resource Agencies, see Attachment (C). Each year proposals submitted must be postmarked by March 1 for the first distribution and September 1 for the second distribution. It is the intent of the Legislature that a grant received from the fund not be considered a substitute for funds previously appropriated or allocated to a natural resources agency.

A complete application from a Natural Resource Agency includes:

- 1. A completed Summary Information Form (as prescribed by the Board);**
- 2. A proposal not to exceed 5 pages that meets the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund's guiding principles, and includes the following:**
 - a. an identification of the fund-distribution category under which the applicant is applying; if there are multiple categories, please specify which one is most pertinent
 - b. the stated objectives of the project and how they will be accomplished
 - c. evidence of the urgency and need for the project
 - d. literature cited, if appropriate
 - e. the potential outcome of the project and how it will be measured
 - f. the project timeline
 - g. for education projects – target audience clearly identified with a well developed distribution plan.
- 3. A list of key personnel involved in the project including a biography or resume of each (not to exceed 1 page per person); and**
- 4. If this is a collaborative project, letters of understanding between partners that describes the specific respective role of each partner.**
- 5. Budget**
 - Expenses:**
 - Personnel (By Task or Person):** _____
 - Project Expenses:**
 - Total Expenses:**
 - Income:**
 - Revenue Sources Secured:**
 - Revenue Sources Planned:**
 - Inkind Support:**
 - MOHF Request:**
 - Total Income:**

Funds may be used to support only project-related expenses, including salaries. Monetary match must consist of funds raised specifically for the project proposed and does not include salary costs of natural resource agency staff that are funded by the State General Fund. In-kind contributions that occur during the duration of the project will be considered matching funds. Proposals that are funded will receive funds according to a schedule determined by the Board.

A final report and an executive summary (not to exceed one page) will be due within three months of the completion of the project. Annual progress reports will be required on projects that extend beyond one year. Final reports, progress reports, and executive summaries should be submitted electronically when possible and will include:

- a review of the project's success in meeting the stated objectives
- a detailed accounting of how Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund monies were spent
- color photographs or slides illustrating the project and its results
- copies of any press related to the project

Attachment C - List of Natural Resource Agencies

Atlantic Salmon Commission

Baxter State Park Authority

Land for Maine's Future Board

Land Use Regulation Commission

Maine Board of Pesticides Control

Maine Conservation Corps

Maine Department of Agriculture

Maine Department of Conservation

Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Maine Department of Marine Resources

Maine State Planning Office

Saco River Corridor Commission

Saint Croix International Waterway Commission

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve Management

